

Remarks

The Applicants respectfully request consideration of the subject application upon entry of this Fourth Preliminary Amendment.

Upon entry of this Fourth Preliminary Amendment, the present application will have claims 1-77 pending and under consideration.

The Applicants hereby notify the Examiner that claims 68 and 69 have been copied from International Patent Application Number PCT/US03/12381 filed April 21, 2003, as published in International Publication Number WO 03/088834 A1 on October 30, 2003 (hereinafter referred to as the “‘834 Publication”). Claims 68 and 69 in the present application respectively correspond to claims 170 and 192 from the ‘834 publication. It should be noted that claims 68 and 69 have been filed within one (1) year of the publication date of the ‘834 Publication, and as a result, the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §135(b)(2), as interpreted by the Patent Office, have been satisfied.

The Applicants hereby notify the Examiner that claims 70, 71 and 77 have been copied from International Patent Application Number PCT/US03/12555 filed April 21, 2003, as published in International Publication Number WO 03/088835 A3 on October 30, 2003 (hereinafter referred to as the “‘835 Publication”). Claims 70, 71 and 77 in the present application corresponds to claims 183, 184 and 289 from the ‘835 publication. It should be noted that claims 70, 71 and 77 have been filed within one (1) year of the publication date of the ‘835 Publication, and as a result, the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §135(b)(2), as interpreted by the Patent Office, have been satisfied.

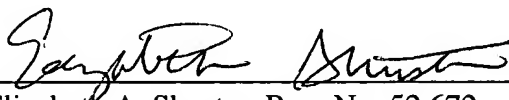
The Applicants hereby notify the Examiner that claims 72-76 have been copied from U.S. Patent Application Number 10/237,261, filed September 5, 2002, as published in U.S. Publication Number 2003/0212424A1 on November 13, 2003 (hereinafter referred to as the “‘424 Publication”). Claims 72-76 in the present application respectively correspond to claims 51-54 and 57 from the ‘424 publication. It should be noted that claims 72-76 have been filed within one (1) year of the publication date of the ‘424 Publication, and as a result, the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §135(b)(2) have been satisfied.

It should be appreciated that the present application has an earlier effective filing date than the above-mentioned applications. In particular, the present application is a continuation of Application Serial No. 09/887,574 filed June 21, 2001, which is a continuation of Application Serial No. 09/552,243 filed April 19, 2000, now U.S. Patent No. 6,352,514, which is a continuation of Application Serial No. 09/298,386 filed April 23, 1999, now U.S. Patent No. 6,099,484, which is a continuation of Application Serial No. 08/858,042 filed May 16, 1997, now U.S. Patent No. 5,951,492, which claims benefit of provisional Application Serial Nos. 60/017,133 filed May 17, 1996; 60/019,918 filed June 14, 1996; 60/023,658 filed August 1, 1996; 60/025,340 filed September 3, 1996; 60/064,856 filed September 17, 1996; 60/092,121 filed September 16, 1996 and 60/044,406 filed October 8, 1996. It also should be noted that the U.S. Patent No. 5,951,492 issued on September 14, 1999, which is more than one year prior to the effective filing dates of the above-mentioned applications.

As should be appreciated, after reviewing the present application, as well as its parent and provisional applications, the claims copied into this case are supported by the application as originally filed. For example, FIGS. 1-8 along with pages 5-10 and 13-19 illustrate and describe a number of the features recited in the above-copied claims. Moreover, the present application incorporates by reference a number references, which provide additional support. It should be understood that these examples are non-limiting in nature, and that support for the copied claims is provided at other parts of the present application.

In view of this Fourth Preliminary Amendment, consideration of the present application, as amended, is respectfully requested. If after reviewing this amendment the Examiner feels that any issues remain which must be resolved, the Examiner is invited to contact the applicants' undersigned representative by telephone to resolve such issues.

Respectfully Submitted,

By 
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